

REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

March 23, 2005

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Snodgrass, Commissioners Allen, Dunn, McCarthy, Parnell, Petitpas

STAFF PRESENT: Terry Marpert, Dianna Broadie, Kim Dietz, Redmond Planning Department; Kurt Seemann, Joel Pfundt, Don Cairns, Redmond Public Works Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the Public Safety Building Council Chambers. The absence of Commissioner Querry was excused.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

A. February 16, 2005

Commissioner Parnell referred to the last paragraph on the third page of the minutes and said “Mr. Castrol” should read “Mr. Castro”. Commissioner Parnell also noted that the minutes on page two do not completely capture everything Mr. Soules said about the non-applicability of the current zoning and Public Works’ requirements, how they are not conducive to the construction of cottages.

Chair Snodgrass suggested adding “He was generally concerned that utilities and public works regulations designed for standard single-family homes do not relate well to this type of development.”

The minutes as amended were approved by acclamation.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

STUDY SESSION

Update of the Comprehensive Plan Introduction and the Neighborhood Element

Commissioner Allen called attention to the most recent revision of the Neighborhood Element as well as the most recent issues matrix. She noted that all of the issues have previously been closed, with the exception of the process for modifying neighborhood boundaries.

The Commission reviewed the editorial revisions and text changes made to the document at the March 16 meeting and in subsequent meetings with staff.

Commissioner Allen called attention to Policy NP-7 where the policy conflict resolution language of the old Policy NP-11 was added back in. Ms. Dietz said staff reviewed the revision and called attention to Policy PI-13 which discusses conflict resolution over the entire Comprehensive Plan and in dealing with the Community Development Guide. That policy does not completely reflect the specific items that can occur in a Neighborhood Plan, such as individual home design guidelines. That is what staff tried to include in their proposed language using the word “specificity.”

There was general agreement not to use the staff language using the word “specificity.”

Commissioner Parnell proposed that the language “...If conflicts occur, neighborhood policies control over the general policies...” should read “...If conflicts occur, neighborhood policies take precedence over the general policies....” The Commission accepted the proposal. He argued in favor of crafting a separate policy to house the conflict language, but the other Commissioners did not agree.

Commissioner Allen said she suggested the proposed revision to the process and planning review section highlighting the CAC recruitment phase as a key milestone.

Commissioner Dunn proposed not limiting the language to just the update process by having the language read “Announcement of the neighborhood planning or update process and recruitment of a neighborhood representative.” She said the same language should be used in Policy NP-9. Her suggestion was adopted.

Commissioner Allen referred to ((the second bullet)) and suggested for purposes of clarification revising it to read “...the presentations....” There was agreement in favor of making the change.

The editorial revisions to Policy NP-9 were accepted by the Commission.

The issue was of modification of neighborhood boundaries. Commissioner Dunn asked if any consideration has been given to splitting the Overlake area where there is a lot going on. Ms. Dietz allowed that there used to be a Viewpoint neighborhood in the Overlake area. If another neighborhood plan is done soon, that may be one area on which to focus some attention.

Commissioner Petitpas asked if the English Hill neighborhood shown on the map is new to Redmond, noting that it is not within the Urban Growth Boundary. Ms. Dietz said the neighborhood used to be in Redmond but for some reason was dropped. King County drew the Urban Growth Boundary to include the area because it is urbanized and it has no real contiguity to Woodinville. Annexation of the area is probably not going to happen since the area is already served by a different utility system, but it is within the Urban Growth Boundary for Redmond.

Commissioner Parnell asked if there is any expectation that a full neighborhood will be able to be fielded in the Sammamish Valley area. Ms. Dietz explained that the Valley View neighborhood was folded into the North Redmond area, and Redmond 74 was brought in to the Education Hill neighborhood because of the residential component of Sammamish Valley. The

Sammamish Valley area will likely be treated in a way different from how it is now being treated.

Motion to adopt the proposed Neighborhood Element and the proposed Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan and forward it to the City Council was made by Commissioner Allen. Second was by Commissioner Petitpas and the motion carried unanimously.

STUDY SESSION

Transportation Master Plan

Chair Snodgrass opened the floor to comments from those wishing to address the Commission during the continued public hearing.

Ms. Lynette Capp, 12506 172nd Avenue NE, said her neighborhood is very quiet; the only traffic the neighborhood sees is associated with people who live in the neighborhood. Extending 172nd will change things dramatically, and make it far less safe for the local residents. The neighborhood should be retained as a neighborhood, not as a thoroughfare.

Mr. Lee Hagie(?), a resident along 172nd Avenue NE, said he could see no justification for the proposal to extend 172nd Avenue NE. He allowed that sometimes it is necessary for a few to sacrifice for the common good of the many, but in this case there is no evidence of need.

Mr. Eric Madieras(?), 12408 172nd Avenue NE, said extending 172nd Avenue NE will create a serious safety concern for the children who live in the neighborhood. The neighborhood was not designed to accommodate a major thoroughfare, which is what the proposed extension will create. The neighborhood should not have to bear the burden of all the development going on to the south. If the roadway is extended, the traffic flow through the neighborhood will increase a hundredfold.

Ms. Julianne Rossiter, 15719 NE 95th Way, addressed the proposed extension of 160th Street. She said the neighborhood in which she lives offers excellent access to the downtown and the park, making it a very desirable place to live. There is a great deal of wildlife nearby that can be seen daily, when walking the trail. The neighborhood is safe for anyone wanting to ride their bicycle. Much would be destroyed if 160th Street were to be punched through, including a wetland area.

Ms. Terri Paine, 15915 NE 95th Way, said she and her husband chose to live just off of 160th Street because of the walkability of the neighborhood. Pedestrian promenades, public squares and places to sit and talk add to the livability of an urban environment. Walking along major arterials with lots of traffic is not desirable. She asked the Commission to recommend against extending 160th Street.

Mr. Dennis Dennis, 15735 NE 95th Way, echoed much of what was said previously about the livability and walkability of neighborhoods. He said the neighborhood in which he lives is very

walkable. It would be taking a step backwards to extend 160th Street and put more cars flowing through.

Ms. Peggy Gladner, 12519 172nd Avenue NE, argued against extending 172nd Avenue. She said she and her husband chose their neighborhood because it is family friendly; a place to put down roots. The neighborhood is safe in its current configuration, but if 172nd is extended, another thoroughfare will be created, and the neighborhood feel will be lost, along with property values.

Mr. (?)13507 172nd Avenue agreed with the previous speakers with regard to the livability of the neighborhood in which he lives. There is not a lot of traffic currently, and the safety and livability of the neighborhood would be degraded if 172nd were to be extended.

Mr. Edward Broder, 17101 NE 136th Place, said he has lived in his home for the past 22 years. He agreed with the comments of his neighbors relative to the arguments against extending 172nd Avenue.

Ms. Tanika Kumar, 15658 NE 95th Way, argued against extending 160th Street. She said she is very concerned that putting the roadway through will disturb the livability and safety of the neighborhood. Alternatives should be sought.

Shikendra Pedai(?), 156(?) NE 95th Way, echoed the comments of his neighbors. He noted that he had not heard anyone speak in favor of the proposed extension of 160th Street. If traffic congestion is the problem, instead of spending \$20 million on extending the roadway, the money should be spent to improve the transit system.

Chair Snodgrass clarified that staff has recommended against the 160th Street project.

Mr. Charles Hie(?), a resident of Winwood(?), address not given, said his neighborhood is strong due in large part to the available facilities for walking and biking. The 160th Street project would ruin that.

Mr. David Carpenter, 15988 NE 95th Way, submitted a petition signed by more than 50 residents of Winwood(?) and River Trails who care passionately about their neighborhoods and want to see their quality of life preserved. He said the residents are all concerned about the proposed 160th Street extension. Consideration should be given to extending Willows Road beyond 124th to Woodinville; that would be a much better north-south option.

Mr. Jason Capp, address not given, asked the Commission to look at the physical makeup of the neighborhood. He noted that the houses are not platted in a way that would make handling large amounts of traffic on 172nd Street very difficult; most are oriented toward and sited close to the road.

Mr. Lee Dennis, 9051 161st Place, said the only benefit from extending 160th Street would be for the residents of Woodinville, at the expense of the citizens of Redmond.

Ms. Jeri Laner, a resident along 124th Street in Sunrise Ridge, said the extension of 172nd would negatively affect the local neighborhood. The area is home to many children as well as wildlife, neither of which is a good match for a thoroughfare. There are other routes that can be used to get into town. The neighborhoods that empty onto 172nd simply were not designed to handle having a thoroughfare going through them.

Planner Don Cairns included in the record two written comments received from citizens.

Absent additional speakers, Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing closed.

The Commissioners worked from the issue sheet dated March 25.

Glenn Eades from the bike/pedestrian committee was invited to join the Commission at the table. Mr. Cairns submitted to the Commission a letter from the committee addressing the 148th Avenue NE corridor proposing having bike lanes on 150th Street as an alternative to 148th Avenue NE.

Mr. Eades said the bike/pedestrian group worked extensively with the consultant. He noted that in the past, 148th Avenue NE was included in the plans as a bicycle route, but it was taken off for reasons of feasibility. There is strong community support, however, in favor of having additional bike facilities. The proposal to use 150th Street instead of 148th Avenue NE is a very reasonable alternative, offering excellent connections.

Mr. Cairns said staff is in agreement with the suggestion of the bike/pedestrian committee. The Commission could make the recommendation by changing the draft Transportation Master Plan.

Commissioner Parnell offered support for the proposal. He asked if the project would be contingent on any other projects in the TFP, and Mr. Pfundt said it rests on acquisition of the railroad right-of-way and the extension from there to Old Redmond Road. The remainder of it is predicated on what happens with the Microsoft development agreement. If that goes through, the dominoes will fall into place.

Chair Snodgrass asked if the current plan for bike lanes along 148th would be lost if the proposal was made for the 150th alternative and the Microsoft development agreement fell through. Mr. Pfundt said the NE 36th overcrossing would no longer be fully funded, so that would be an issue. In any event, 148th could continue to operate as a shared pathway, so bike access will not be completely lost. Mr. Cairns added that staff is optimistic that the Microsoft development agreement will be worked out satisfactorily.

Commissioner Dunn noted that connection to the Puget Power trail is also recommended and she asked when that is planned. Mr. Pfundt said the part going up the hill was identified by the Rose Hill neighborhood plan as a priority. It is not funded and is not included in the TMP. A preliminary route study is needed, and as a regional trail there is the possibility of getting grant funding for it.

Commissioner Dunn asked if any consideration has been given to improving Redmond Way to better accommodate bicycles. Mr. Eades allowed that there are few options for fixing Redmond Way for the benefit of bicycles. Mr. Cairns said Redmond Way is planned to continue primarily for the benefit of vehicular travel, which is the primary reason alternative bicycle routes are being sought. The intent is to include sidewalks along the roadway separated from the auto traffic.

****BREAK****

Mr. Pfundt distributed to the Commissioners a memo outlining the pros and cons of the various projects. With regard to the 160th Street project, he said to some degree it is tied to the SR-202 widening project; while one could be done without the other, they make the most sense if done together by completing the capacity of the corridor between 90th and 124th. Neither project is in the currently recommended draft of the plan. Extending 160th Street would provide additional north-south capacity along the Redmond-Woodinville corridor and reduce cut-through traffic on Education Hill by pulling some 400 vehicles off of 166th during the evening peak hour. On the other hand, the project would create cut-through traffic in a neighborhood that has none now. The modeling shows the Redmond-Woodinville Road operating beyond its capacity by 2022 without the 160th Street extension.

Mr. Cairns clarified that the corridor currently operates at or above its capacity during the evening peak hours. Twenty years into the future the modeling anticipates a doubling of the downtown, and the Redmond-Woodinville Road is a major corridor into and out of the downtown. The project is included on the current TFP, though the draft plan recommends its removal from that list.

Mr. Pfundt said the extension if constructed would provide a more direct and quicker transit connection from Education Hill to the downtown. Redmond-Woodinville is an alternative route, though it does not provide the same convenient access to transit from the River Trail neighborhood. The project does not increase the number of passthrough trips through the downtown. The project would impact a wetland area, which is one of the reasons for the \$16 million price tag. There would also be noise and air quality impacts associated with the increased traffic resulting from the project.

Mr. Cairns allowed that the extension would improve response times for emergency services to the 800 homes in the River Trail area. Normally, if there are more than 100 homes not well served a second access is required. When the neighborhood along the corridor was developed, the plan was to have 160th Street be five lanes to Redmond-Woodinville Road. The fire department gave its okay to the development because the plan called for the roadway to be extended. However, it was concluded that the street is wide enough in its present configuration to allow for firefighting.

Commissioner Parnell asked how the extension was supposed to alleviate traffic if it all comes together in a bottleneck at Redmond-Woodinville Road. Mr. Pfundt said the Redmond-Woodinville Road widening project was intended to take care of the bottleneck problem.

Mr. Cairns added that there is no consensus even among staff and the consultant with regard to the need for the 160th Street extension project.

Commissioner Parnell asked if a permeable concrete bike trail could double as an emergency access route into the neighborhood. Mr. Cairns said even a bike trail would require a structure to bridge the wetlands area, which would be expensive.

Chair Snodgrass polled the Commissioners with regard to whether or not the 160th Street project should be left off the TMP as recommended by staff or included. The Commissioners were unanimous in favor of the staff position. Chair Snodgrass agreed with staff as well but said he has concerns about the north-south corridor.

Mr. Cairns said the project to improve Redmond-Woodinville Road to something more akin to a multimodal corridor should be added back into the plan. The money allocated for the 160th Street extension could be used for the improvement project.

With regard to the 172nd Street project, Mr. Pfundt said the biggest negative is the increase in traffic for the neighborhoods between 122nd and 128th, possibly as many as 3000 daily trips. Traffic volumes from 122nd to 116th will not significantly change, according to the modeling, but realistically there could be some incremental increase. The primary reason for the project is improved emergency access. A new fire station is planned for 116th to serve the general area and Education Hill, and the additional corridor would reduce response times. The model also shows that traffic from English Hill would use 172nd if constructed as proposed, relieving some of the pressure on Redmond-Woodinville Road. Mr. Cairns said the connection is not, however, considered to be essential.

Commissioner Petitpas asked if the roadway has ever been a private road. Mr. Cairns allowed that there is some question about the ownership of the road and the right-of-way. In the understanding of staff, it does belong to the city, but it has never been put through as a street. It is possible that the street could be paved just to serve as improved access for emergency vehicles.

Commissioner Parnell asked if any consideration has been given to connecting the section between “where the dotted line starts” and 104th Street. Mr. Cairns said west of the high school there is right-of-way but no street between 104th Street and 111th Street. It is also a very steep area. The concept has been considered in the past, however.

Commissioner McCarthy asked how many similar projects has the city done, or would consider doing, where there is direct access from driveways onto the street, and to what extent access into and out of the driveways halt the flow of traffic, lessening the value of the connection. Mr. Cairns said the city has in the past looked at a number of similar connections. The 172nd project rose on the list because of the level of new construction in the area and the relative ease with which the short connection could be made. The primary problem is that the neighborhood street to the north from 124th to 128th is not designed to function as anything but a residential street. To the north of 128th, 172nd is designed quite a bit differently. If the roadway is to go through, the

city will need to be conscious of design treatments to the corridor to manage it as a 25-mph street.

Commissioner Dunn noted that 172nd Avenue southbound where it spills out onto 116th Street is a bottleneck. She asked what the alternatives were two years ago for north-south connections between 122nd Street and 116th Street. Mr. Cairns said the project as outlined has been on the books since 1995. Other connections have been considered in the past, and some of them will be developed as the area builds out.

Commissioner Parnell suggested that there are two compelling arguments for keeping the project in the plan: improved emergency access, and improved bike/pedestrian access between English Hill and the downtown. It should be possible to accommodate both without having any additional automobile traffic by making it an emergency and non-motorized only connection.

Chair Snodgrass held that while the concerns of the local residents are valid, most can be addressed through appropriate design guidance. For the benefit of the city as a whole, the Commission should take the broader view. Redmond has a startling lack of connections such as the one the 172nd project will provide. The model may not show it, but the project likely will help to relieve some of the problems on 116th.

Commissioner Allen said she is bothered by the fact that the homes in the area are older and well established. There has been a great deal of new development in the immediate vicinity, yet no new connections have been added. Those who have lived in their homes for a long time will have to pay the price. Chair Snodgrass suggested that no new connections were included in those developments because the city had the wrong concurrency system. With plan-based concurrency, that type of poor planning will not occur.

Commissioner Allen indicated support for the proposal offered by Commissioner Parnell. Chair Snodgrass argued that taking that approach will only push the problems off onto some other neighborhood.

By way of background, Mr. Marpert explained that in 1995 the city adopted a new Comprehensive Plan. At the time it was known that a lot of growth would be occurring in the north Redmond area by the late 90's and early in the 2000's. A street plan and neighborhood plan were developed in 1997 which included an attempt at fitting a street pattern on the low-density, rural areas. As the areas develop the street pattern is emerging.

Commissioner Dunn voiced concerns about going through the neighborhood. She indicated support for allowing emergency access and bike/pedestrian only. If the street is punched through, it will ultimately function like a collector, even if the design includes traffic calming features. She said she is not comfortable taking away from the local neighborhood in favor of putting the roadway through. Another alternative will need to be identified, however.

Commissioner McCarthy agreed that additional connections are necessary. The emergency services approach would be nice but it is not the ultimate solution. The notion of including traffic calming designs is great, but there is no guarantee that they would be included. The

conscious decision made to go with the plan-based approach was made fully accepting that there will be more congestion and longer travel times for SOVs. Nowhere else in the city is staff contemplating a connector that will see a lot of vehicular traffic along a stretch where driveways empty directly onto it.

Commissioner Petitpas concurred with the need for additional connections and noted that in a perfect world the 172nd connection would make sense. Connections should have been included in the new developments, but they were not. Over time Redmond will continue to grow and traffic will increase. It is possible to design the roadway in a manner that will discourage its use as a thoroughfare or for cut-through traffic.

A motion to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m. was approved by acclamation.

Chair Snodgrass allowed that the Commission will have to reach a decision at the next meeting. He asked the Commissioners to review the revised issues table and determine which ones still need to be discussed.

It was agreed that an additional meeting will need to be scheduled for March 30.

REPORTS

SCHEDULING/TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING(S)

Mr. Marpert indicated that staff are still working to develop a list of topics for the Commission's April 20 retreat.

ADJOURN

Chair Snodgrass adjourned the meeting at 10:09 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Recording Secretary